

# Touched by Fire



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For more than a century, Americans have been captivated by the legend of General George Armstrong Custer. But the various truths of Custer's life and last stand prove elusive. Why are we so taken with the myth and the so-called mystery behind the man? In a field teeming with highly partisan and wildly speculative treatments of Custer, Louise Barnett enters with a volume widely acclaimed by both military and cultural historians as the most balanced account of his life and legend. Custer's life spans two great eras of American history, and Barnett's commanding work pushes beyond the existing literature to a comprehensive view of this controversial figure. Louise Barnett is a professor of English and American studies at Rutgers University and the author of a number of books, including "The Ignoble Savage: American Literary Racism, 1790-1890", and "Ungentlemanly Acts: The Army's Notorious Incest Trial".

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